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ABSTRACT

A project was conducted to continue to provide adult educators in Pennsylvania with information about adults with learning differences and techniques for their instruction. Five new training sessions were developed as part of the project: (1) accommodating adults with learning disabilities; (2) if they think differently, shouldn't they study differently; (3) designing programs to meet the needs of adults who learn differently; (4) improving reading comprehension; and (5) vocabulary development. A variety of methods were used in the staff development. During the project, more than 200 adult educators who did not participate in the previous projects received training, and more than 250 additional adult educators who had attended previous training attended advanced training during the project year. A learning disabilities newsletter was developed and disseminated to adult educators throughout the state. (Appendixes include samples of the project newsletter, strategies for vocabulary building, and descriptions of the training sessions.) (KC)

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Statewide Staff Development Project:

Adults with Learning Differences

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by Richard Cooper, Ph.D

1997/98

Center for Alternative Learning
6 E. Eagle Rd.
Havertown, PA 19083
610-446-6126

RECEIVED
SEP 03 1998

Contract No. 99-8006
Contract Amount: $44,000.00

Final Report

The activity which is the subject of this report was supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education or the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and no official endorsement by these agencies should be inferred.

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Abstract Page Project No: 99-8006

Grant Recipient: Center for Alternative Learning
6 E. Eagle Rd.
Havertown, PA 19083
610-446-6126

Program Name: Statewide Staff Development Project: Adults with Learning Differences

Grant Allocation: $44,000

Project Period: July 1, 1997 to June 30, 1998

Project Director: Richard Cooper, Ph.D.

Project Purpose: The project proposed to provide adult educators in Pennsylvania with information about adults with learning differences and techniques for their instruction.

Project Outcomes: Adult educators in Pennsylvania who participated in the training activities have a better understanding of adults who learn differently and learned how to use alternative instructional tools and techniques for teaching.

Impact: The project helped to improve adult education services provided throughout the state of Pennsylvania to adults who learn differently

Training Developed: Five new training sessions were developed as part of this year's project:
1) *Accommodating Adults with Learning Disabilities*
2) *If They Think Differently, Shouldn't They Study Differently,*
3) *Designing Programs to Meet the Needs of Adults Who Learn Differently,*
4) *Improving Reading Comprehension*
5) *Vocabulary Development.*

Products Available: This final report.

Project Continuation: The Pennsylvania Statewide Staff Development project will continue to operate during the academic year of 1998/1999.

Conclusion/Recommendations Before the project year was concluded, the Center received more than ten requests for training in the next project year. Program directors of many adult education programs state that there is a need to provide new teachers and volunteer tutors with a basic understanding of adults who learn differently. Additionally they have cited the need to provide advanced training for some staff at the local level so that they can help other adult educators assess and teach adults who learn differently.

Statewide Staff Development Project: Adults with Learning Differences

Introduction

The Statewide Staff Development project, conducted by the Center for Alternative Learning, proposed to provide adult educators in Pennsylvania with information about adults with learning differences and training in the use of alternative instructional techniques. The project began on July 1, 1997 and ended June 30, 1998. This project was a continuation of projects operated during the two previous academic years.

The project director and trainer was Dr. Richard Cooper, a nationally recognized expert in the field of learning disabilities. He worked with the coordinators of the six Professional Development Centers who surveyed their regions to determine training needs. The coordinators and their staffs scheduled and handled the logistics for the majority of the project's training sessions. Administrative and clerical support was provided by the staff and volunteers at the Center for Alternative Learning.

Individuals who will find this report useful are staff development administrators who are interested in training adult educators and volunteer literacy tutors to better serve the needs of adults who have learning differences, problems and disabilities.

This report is available from the Adult Basic and Literacy Education's Resource Centers where permanent copies are on file.

AdvancE State Literacy Resource Center
333 Market St., 11th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
800-992-9192 in Pennsylvania
717-783-9192 from outside PA

Fax: 717-783-5420

Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center
5347 William Flynn Hwy. Rt. 8
Gibsonia, PA 15044-9644
800-446-5607, ext. 216 in Pennsylvania
412-961-0294, ext. 216 from outside PA
Fax: 412-443-1310

This report is also available from the:

Center for Alternative Learning
6 E. Eagle Rd.
Havertown, PA 19083
800-869-8336
610-446-6126
Fax: 610-446-6129

This report is online at the Center's web site at:

www.learningdifferences.com

Project Description

The National Institute for Literacy has continued to respond to the growing need for more information about adults with learning problems through its National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center. The establishment of the National Center was a manifestation of the growing concern adult educators and volunteer literacy tutors have expressed to have more information about learning problems and techniques for teaching adults who have those problems. The number of adults with learning problems in adult programs is not known because not all who have difficulty learning have a servere problem or been

diagnosed as having a learning disability. Mild and moderate learning problems can limit an individual's academic achievement even if the learning problems are not severe enough to be classified as a disability. Estimates of how many adults with learning problems are enrolled in adult education programs range from 20% to 80%. At this time, the actual number of adults with learning problems enrolled in adult education programs cannot be accurately counted. However, new and promising research about learning problems may soon produce more accurate ways of measuring learning problems. Until that time adult educators need to learn as much as they can about adults who learn differently. This project directly addresses the need for information about learning differences, problems and disabilities and instructional techniques proven to meet special learning needs.

Goals

The project had three goals. 1) to continue the staff development project which was begun in the 1995/96 academic year, 2) to provide adult educators in Pennsylvania with a wide range of staff development activities, and 3) to facilitate the flow of information from national, regional and state information centers to adult educators in Pennsylvania.

Objectives

The project goals were to be achieved through the following objectives:

1. To operate a statewide staff development project in each of the six regional professional development centers which continues the training for adult educators provided in the 1995/96 and 1996/97 staff development projects.

2. To use a variety of staff development methods: training sessions, video recording, distance learning technology, printed material, classroom demonstrations and observations, 800 toll free hot line, newsletter, fax and e-mail to achieve the competencies for adult educators identified by the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education.

3. To provide training to at least 200 adult educators who did not participate in the previous years' projects and to provide advanced training to at least 250 adult educators.

4. To conduct a minimum of 60 staff development activities, training sessions, demonstrations, consultations and observations in the regional staff development centers and adult education agencies throughout the state.

5. To encourage the learning about and the development of instructional strategies and techniques matched to the individual's learning differences rather than to a grade level.

6. To improve the quality of the presentation overheads and video tapes used in the staff development training sessions.

7. To operate the staff development project incorporating the ABLE Guiding Principles for Staff Development.

8. To obtain information from the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center, University of Kansas, Kansas State University, Penn State University and other national, regional and state centers and incorporate this information in the training sessions.

9. To develop additional training sessions on the NALLD Center's "tool kit" and the accommodations model using the information and materials from University of Kansas and Kansas State University research on accommodations and the "tool kit" which will be available from the NALLD Center.

10. To develop and offer a course on learning differences to 25 adult educators providing them with sufficient information so that they will be able to conduct training about learning differences.

11. To prepare and disseminate a final report.

Procedures

The project began with the development of five new training sessions: 1) *Accommodating Adults who have Learning Disabilities*, 2) *If They Think Differently, Shouldn't They Study Differently*, 3) *Designing Adult Education Programs to Meet the Needs of Adults With Learning Differences, Problems and Disabilities*, 4) *Helping Adults to Improve Reading Comprehension* and 5) *Vocabulary Development for Adults with Learning Problems*. These were added to the list of training topics which adult educators could choose from (see Appendix B). This list of the training topics and descriptions of their content was distributed to the six Professional Development Centers. The coordinators of the regional Centers scheduled training sessions which took place throughout the year. Dr. Cooper conducted all the training sessions which ranged from one hour sessions with volunteer tutors to full day training for teachers and volunteer tutors. All of the training sessions which were scheduled were completed. One training session had to be rescheduled because of a double booking training in two different regions. The training was rescheduled and completed 10 days later.

At each of the training sessions, Dr. Cooper distributed handouts which outlined or exemplified the material being covered in the training. Many of the training sessions included demonstrations of instructional tools which the trainer has developed for students who learn differently.

A number of training sessions were conducted on how to screen adults for learning differences. These training sessions were offered in two different formats. One format was the explanation of the Cooper Screening for Information Processing and participants administering it to each other to become familiar with the instrument. The second format involved Dr. Cooper administering the instrument to adult students from the local programs who agreed to participate. The latter provided not just training about screening, but also met a critical need to have students with significant learning problems evaluated so that their learning problems could be properly addressed.

Some training sessions involved the demonstration of alternative instructional techniques with adult students from the local program. These training sessions included an explanation of the techniques followed by a demonstration with students. Participants were then provided with the opportunity of asking questions and discussing the pros and cons of the demonstrated techniques.

The *Learning disAbilities Newsletter* was distributed at each training session, and it was also mailed to all the ABLE funded adult education programs in the state. Each issue of the newsletter included news about the Statewide Staff Development Project, a schedule of up-coming training sessions and an article about learning differences or techniques for assisting individuals who learn differently.

One of the objectives, which was not met during the previous year, was met during this current project; that was to increase the communication between adult educators and the Center's staff through e-mail. The Center up-graded its computer systems including a faster modem for internet access. Consequently, Dr. Cooper obtained an e-mail address through America Online, and the Center established a web site. These improvements to the Center's communication

system resulted in more inquiries from adult educators and facilitated the scheduling of training sessions. The Learning disAbilities Newsletter is now available online at the Center's web site (www.learningdifferences.com).

Project Objectives Which Were Met

1. The objective to operate a continuation of the 1995/96 and 1996/97 statewide staff development project in each of the six regional Professional Development Centers was met. The continuity achieved through this continuation resulted in hundreds of adult educators receiving integrated on-going training about adults with learning differences and alternative instructional techniques rather than isolated or random training.

2. The second objective was to deliver the staff development through a variety of methods. Through this project adult educators were able to attend training sessions on a wide variety of topics, view video recordings of training sessions, receive printed material including the newsletter, training session handouts, instructional tools and books about learning differences. Training was also provided through classroom demonstrations and demonstrations of screening techniques. Adult educators and volunteer tutors received individualized training through the Center's 800 toll free hot line, and e-mail.

3. This year's project exceeded the expected attendees. A number of adult education programs which had not previously scheduled training did so this year. The staff at these programs and new teachers and tutors at programs where training had been previously provided, resulted in that more than 200 adult educators (who did not participate in the previous years' projects) received training. More than 250 adult educators who had attended previous training attended advanced training during this project year.

4. The project proposed through objective four to conduct a minimum of 60 staff development activities, training sessions, demonstrations, consultations and observations in the regional staff development centers and adult education agencies throughout the state. The number of group training activities was 76. Additionally many individual teachers and tutors obtained information and materials from the Center's staff.

5. The fifth objective was to encourage adult educators to learn about instructional strategies and techniques which can be matched to the individual's learning differences rather than to a grade level. This objective was met by Dr. Cooper demonstrating the use of level independent instruction tools and methods. These tools and methods are individualized, and they are used when an adult student has become frustrated because traditional methods or other materials have not produced expected achievement levels.

6. Evaluations from participants in the previous statewide staff development projects on adults with learning differences indicated that some of the overhead projector transparencies used in the project's training sessions were becoming worn and difficult to read. When the Center up-graded its computer systems this year, Dr. Cooper was able to redo many of his transparencies, especially the most worn ones. The new transparences are multi-colored and contain graphics. Many project participants commented that the new transparencies have improved the quality of the training sessions.

7. To operate the staff development project incorporating the ABLE Guiding Principles for Staff Development.

8. The eighth objective of the project was to obtain information about learning differences from other national, regional and state sources and incorporate this information into the training sessions. This objective was met by Dr. Cooper's continuous research in the field of learning differences and his

professional activities which enabled him to participate in a number of national, regional and state projects. Since all of the training sessions which Dr. Cooper conducts as part of this project are customized for each presentation, he was able to incorporated the latest information about learning disabilities, problems and differences into the training sessions. During this project year, he has attended a number of national conferences on adult education and adults with special needs. During this project year, he was a consultant for the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center project in Maryland; has been appointed to the advisory board of one of the National Institute for Literacy's dissemination projects; and has distributed information for the University of Kansas and Kansas State University's research project on accommodations for adults with disabilities.

9. The ninth objective was to develop training sessions based on the information being produced at the NALLD Center and University of Kansas and Kansas State University. Five new training topics were added to the list of training sessions which are available through this project. One of these, *Accommodating Adults Who Have Learning Disabilities*, Dr. Cooper developed using the research results from the Kansas research project on accommodations. This training was offered at programs in three of the Professional Development Centers during this project year.

10. The tenth objective was to develop and offer a course on learning differences to 25 adult educators providing them with sufficient information so that they would be able to conduct local training about learning differences. This objective was only partially met. The course was developed and begun, but participants will complete the course during the next project year.

11. The final objective was to prepare and disseminate a final report. This report is available from AdvancE and the Western Pennsylvania Resource Center and on the Center's web site at www.learningdifferences.com.

Project Objectives Which Were Not Met

Two objectives were not fully met. Objective nine was to develop training sessions based on the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center's "tool kit". However, the "tool kit" was not ready during this project year so it was not possible to develop a training session on that topic. The second objective which was not fully met was the course on learning differences. The original intent of offering the course was to offer it for college credit through a university. However, this proved to be difficult and unnecessary. Many of the adult educators indicated that they were not interested in taking it for college credit, and the course would have to be approved by a number of schools in order for it to be of use for the few who would have taken it for credit. Both of these objectives will be addressed during the next project year.

Evaluation

Evaluation instruments were provided by the coordinators of the Professional Development Centers. At the end of each session, Dr. Cooper reviewed these evaluations to note comments which could be used to improve future training sessions. The evaluations showed that most of the participants found the training helpful and practical. In some of the training, a few participants reported that the training did not meet their needs because the students they teach do not have learning problems.

The external evaluator, Doug Mackey, reviewed random samples of the evaluations completed by training session participants and interviewed Dr. Cooper about the project. He also talked with some adult education program directors about their need for training on adults with learning differences. He reported, "Participants in training sessions invariably comment favorably on

sessions and content. Based on observations, reviews, and follow-up contacts, available materials and training sessions are sought with enthusiasm. Participants and educators contacting the Center for training note the interesting and useful methods and techniques, reinforcement of previously learned ideas, new and helpful approaches to instruction, and strong interest in continued and expanded sessions at local sites. The presentations provided materials, approaches, and suggestions for direct and immediate use to a wide number of adult students with varied levels of need."

Dissemination

Copies of this report are permanently on file at the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education. Copies can be obtain for review by contacting the AdvancE and Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center. This report is also available from the Center for Alternative Learning and has been added to the Center's web site at www.learningdifferences.com.

This staff development project is further disseminated through Dr. Cooper's work around the country. The training sessions which are offered as part of this project were developed by him and he presents these same training sessions at national conferences and for adult education programs and agencies in many states who contract for his services.

Appendices

A) Sample Copy of the Learning disAbilities Newsletter
Vol. 15, No. 4, July 1998

B) List of the Training Topics with Descriptions

Center for Alternative Learning
6 E. Eagle Road
Havertown, PA 19083

Serving Those Who Learn Differently

Learning disAbilities Newsletter

Vol. 15 No.4 **July 1998**

Center for Alternative Learning
6 East Eagle Road
Havertown, PA 19083
610-446-6126

www.learningdifferences.com

New Newsletter Format

We are pleased to bring you the Learning disAbilities Newsletter in its new format and hope that you like the change. The new format has been made possible with the up-grading of the printing equipment at the Center. As you can see, we can now print 11" by 17" paper in three colors. The new press is also used to produce the many handouts that Dr. Cooper distributes at the training sessions he conducts.

www.learningdifferences.com

As was announced in the last Newsletter, the Center has a web site. The address is www.learningdifferences.com. The web site already contains this newsletter and past newsletters. To download the newsletter, go to the newsletter section of the website and either print it or save it into a file. Dr. Cooper's training catalog and Learning disAbilities Resources catalog are also available on our web site.

The number of hits on our web site continues to increase. As of July 1st the number of hits exceeded 500. We plan to up-date the web site once a week with Dr. Cooper's speaking and training schedule and announcements about the Center and more detailed information about the products listed in the Learning disAbilities Resources Catalog. If there is information you would like to see on the web site or ways that you believe we can use it more effectively, we would like to hear from you.

Accommodating Adults with Disabilities

The researchers at the University of Kansas and Kansas State University have published the results of the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research project which researched Accommodating Adults with Disabilities in Adult Education Programs. They have produced a resource guide for adult educators and for adult students. The guide lists the rights and responsibilities of both teachers and students. In addition, there is a manual which contains much information about accommodations for different disabilities. Adult educators can obtain a copy of the resource guide on accommodations from the University of Kansas. The cost for the guide is $24.00 plus $4.00 for shipping. For more information contact, Dr. Daryl Mellard, at 785-864-4780.

Training Modules on Learning Differences. Dr. Cooper is finishing up work on two training modules for the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The two training, Characteristics of Learning Differences, and Assessing Adults who Learn Differently, will be used to provide training on adults with learning differences to adult educators throughout the state. Adult educators can participate in one or both of these training before taking Dr. Cooper's training offered through the Statewide Staff Development Project.

Center For Alternative Learning

Because of the popularity of operating the adult education classes through the summer months last year, we plan to do so again this summer. We have found that many adult students want to continue to work on their basic academic skills and do not like to take the summer off from practicing their skills. Volunteer tutors and the teachers will be available at the Center during the following hours.

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
1:00 to 3:00 Adult Basic Skills
Monday and Wednesday Evenings
6:00 to 8:00 Adult Basic Skills
Tuesday and Thursday Mornings
10:00 to 11:30 English as a Second Language

Summer Course Dr. Cooper will conduct a course for the teachers through the Delaware County Intermediate Unit at the Upper Darby School District. The 15 hour, one credit course for elementary and secondary teachers will be held in Upper Darby on August 3rd and 5th. The title of the course is Teaching Reading and Writing to Children with Learning Problems. School districts which would like to offer this or other courses for their teachers, should contact, the Center's staff at 800-869-8336.

Appendix A

National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs

NAASLN The members of the association and professionals in the fields of adult education and disabilities were saddened to learn of the death of William R. Langner on June 18. Bill was co-founder and current president of NAASLN. The following article appeared in the Richmond Times Dispatch on June 26, the day of his funeral which Dr. Cooper and Anne Louise attended.

Champion For Disabled Dies at 66

Despite his credentials and a willingness to work, William R. Langner found it difficult to find an employer in the 1960's, when few companies wanted to hire a person in a wheelchair.

After several years of bouncing from job to job, he found his calling as an educator and a national advocate for adult learners.

A funeral for Mr. Langner will be held at 11 a.m. Friday at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 1214 Wilmer Ave., in Richmond. He will be buried in the church cemetery.

His body was found in his Washington home Sunday. He apparently had died of a heart attack during the weekend. He was 66.

Mr. Langner retired in 1995 from the U.S. Department of Education, where he had worked for 15 years providing national leadership in education programs for adults with disabilities and for adults seeking secondary education. A founding member and president of the National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs, he also helped found the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education. He was president of the Langner Foundation, an international adult education organization, and coordinated the First Congress for Adult Learners with Disabilities.

Mr. Langner was 18 and a freshman at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg when he was in an automobile accident that left him paralyzed below the waist.

After earning a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Virginia in 1957, he had planned to enter the import/export industry. His disability hindered those prospects, and he later worked several different jobs, including a year as a private school teacher.

When a friend asked Mr. Langner to tutor a disabled child, he finally found a position that suited him.

He began the former Langner Learning Center in the early 1970's on Adams and Franklin streets in Richmond, helping residents find tutors in a variety of subjects and supplying a meeting place for tutoring sessions.

From 1971 to 1975, he was a member of the Virginia State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and spent two years as an adjunct faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Appointed by President Nixon, Mr. Langner served on the National Advisory Council on Adult Education from 1973 to 1976.

With the Department of Education, he implemented the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disability Center. And he was instrumental in organizing the Clearing House on Adult Education and Literacy.

Mr. Langner was vigilant in educating educators on accommodating people with disabilities and worked with the GED Testing Service to train test administrators. He was a member of the National GED Advisory Committee from 1981 to 1987.

The family suggests memorial contributions to the American Heart Association, 4323 Cox Rd. Glen Allen, VA 23060 or the William R. Langner Memorial Fund to Advance Lifelong Learning Opportunities for Adults with Special Learning Needs, c/o NAASLN, 1444 I St., NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20005.

Preparations for the 1998 NAASLN Conference are under way. The conference will be held at the King Henry VIII Hotel located near the St. Louis Mission Airport. The conference will again feature a Symposium on Accommodating Adults with Disabilities in Adult Education Programs. The first Symposium was held at the NAASLN conference in New Orleans in 1996. The conference will also feature presenters from around the country speaking about issues involving adults with special learning needs and, as always, a number of presentations about instructional techniques. For information about registration contact Diane Glass 785-296-7159.

car and continued on to the conference. On the way back they found that the police in Stafford and Prince George Counties, Virginia, had traced the car and retrieved it. Unfortunately Dr. Cooper's laptop computer was in the car. It was also stolen but not retrieved. That is the reason that this newsletter is late because it was on the computer and the backup disk was with the computer.

Training Catalog

A list of Dr. Cooper's training sessions and courses, including descriptions of each topic, is included in the **1998 International Learning Differences Training Catalog**. Anyone considering having Dr. Cooper make a presentation at their school, group or conference should contact our office to obtain a copy of the catalog or download it from the web site. Call toll free 800-869-8336 to have a copy sent by mail.

Parts of Speech Poster

As many of our readers know, Dr. Cooper developed Tic Tac Toe Math, a method for doing math for those who cannot remember the times tables. He has observed (over the 12 years since he developed Tic Tac Toe Math) that students who are good with visual patterns learn Tic Tac Toe Math the quickest. Some students seem to learn and remember information when they can see patterns. On the following page is a reduced size copy of the Parts of Speech Poster which Dr. Cooper designed to help students see the patterns in the structure of language. Seeing the structure of language as patterns makes it easy for some students to learn and understand parts of speech. When a student sees that a sentence is most often formed by going left to right (noun to verb, pronoun to verb), the structure of language becomes concrete. The sentence can start with an article. Adjectives are added to modify nouns, adverbs are added to describe verbs. Prepositional phrases go from the bottom right to the top left. In the next Learning disAbilities Resources Catalog a laminated copy of this page will be available. Students will be able to use an erasable marker to trace the patterns of different sentences.

Borders Books in Bryn Mawr Aids Center for Alternative Learning

Borders Books and Music has a special project, The ***Open Books for Children Project***, a program supporting literacy for children. Borders Books and Music in Bryn Mawr, PA has selected the Center for Alternative Learning as its local partner for this quarter of the year. Borders' customers are encouraged to make a donation to the project for childrens' literacy, half will go to the national partner, Reading is Fundamental (RIF) and the other half will go to our Center. If you live in the Philadelphia area, please consider participating in this project. If you don't live in this area, you can make a donation directly to the Center for Alternative Learning.

Newsletter Subscription

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State___ Zip_____

One year	$10.00	_____
Two year	$18.00	_____
Donation to the Center		_____
Total		_____

National Speaking Schedule

Dr. Cooper added two states to the locations were he has done training on learning differences, problems and disabilities. He conduced training for two technical institutes in Georgia during May and conducted six days of training at the Technical College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in June. This brings the total of states in which he has conducted training to 32. Closer to home, he made a presentation on Attention Deficit Disorder (the Racing Mind) to a chapter of Tough Love in King of Prussia.

Along the way sometimes the road gets rough. As Dr. Cooper and Anne-Louise, his wife, headed to a Literacy Conference in North Carolina, someone stole their car. They rented a

Parts of Speech

Noun

Person Place Thing Idea

Pronoun

I	we	me	us
you	you	you	you
he	they	him	them
she		her	
it		it	

Verb

Action Being

Adjective

which? what kind of?
how many? how much?

Article

the a an

Adverb

when? where? why?
how? to what extent?

Conjunction

and for but or

Interjection

Wow! Oh! Ouch!

Preposition

in on for by over under

Appendix A

Vocabulary Development

Many individuals with learning differences, problems and disabilities have weak language skills which directly impact their vocabulary development. A limited vocabulary often equals a limited education and a limited career.

John came to the Center for Alternative Learning for an assessment of his reading skills. John had just completed one semester of college but had received only average grades despite great effort on his part. The assessment revealed that John's vocabulary was far below what would be expected for his age and high school grades. His ambiguous understanding of many words and his complete misunderstanding of other words not only reduced his reading comprehension but also his ability to fully understand the content of his classes. John needed to increase his vocabulary to be successful in college. He needed to engage in a systematic and regular study of vocabulary.

Most of us take vocabulary for granted since we learn words and their meaning as we grow. By the time we are in our teens, we usually know enough words to function in school and society. Most individuals who can read and have at least a high school education would consider their vocabulary adequate. Adequate meaning that the person can understand oral communication, express one's thoughts in speech and is able to comprehend common reading material. But many individuals with learning differences have weak vocabularies.

The reasons why these individuals have weak vocabularies are often complex and overlapping, but here are a few of the common reasons for weak vocabularies. The person 1) lives in an environment where higher level vocabularies are not used, 2) has a lower education level because the person either did not complete school or the education was of poor quality, 3) attended special education classes in which lower level vocabulary was used in class and in textbooks, 4) does not read much or has a reading problem, 5) does not pay attention to words, 6) has an auditory perception problem which makes it difficult to hear the subtle differences in words, 7) does not have a good understanding of the structure of language including parts of speech and word parts, prefixes, suffixes and word roots.

During the course of a year, most of the adults who are not enrolled in formal education do not add many words to their active vocabularies. They might learn the names of new things they encounter but not learn many new adjectives, adverbs or verbs. Yes, when reading many people encounter new words and understand the meaning in context, but they do not use those word in conversation or in writing. Usually not. It takes more than understanding the meaning of a word in context to fully add it to your vocabulary. It is easy to add a word to your receptive vocabulary (listening and reading), but it takes more work or study to add a word to your expressive vocabulary (speaking and writing).

To understand vocabulary development, note the following diagram. The two columns represent the amount of words two individuals know. There are more words in the English language than we need to know. Just think of the words professionals, e.g. physicians,lawyers, engineers, anthropologists, etc., use in their areas of specialties; the combination of all those areas of specialties equal lots of words. We can compare the column of words that an average person would have to the column of words of a person who has a weak vocabulary. It includes many words which are fully known, other words which are ambiguous (not fully or precisely understood) and a large number of words which are unknown.

Systematic Regular Study: A person's vocabulary can be increased by the systematic and regular study of words. The systematic study of words requires that a person has a system that works for that person. Regular means different things to different people; it might mean daily to one person, while to another it means weekly. It is obvious that the more frequent the regular study is, the more effective the vocabulary development will be. However, if a person tries to have the regular study of words five times a day but cannot maintain it, then it is less effective than once a day if that regularity can be maintained. Some individuals need help to engage in regular study. That assistance can come from a tutor, family member or a friend, but it should be noted that unsolicited assistance is often rejected.

Setting Up A System A system of vocabulary development should have at least the following components: a method for word collection, a place for the words that are collected and space for definitions. Additional components for a vocabulary study system would include: identification of parts of speech, space for writing a sentence for each of the definitions of the words, space for synonyms and antonyms, a space for spelling and pronunciation clues, space for mnemonics, illustrations or diagrams and a space for related words. Individuals can set up a system themselves or the person can use a system that has been set up by someone else. The *Vocabulary Workbook* which I have developed is an example of a complex system which is designed to include all of the items listed above.

Working The System Once the system is in place it has to be worked. On a regular basis, the person needs to collect words, review those words, and use the words in speech and writing. This is where the regular part of vocabulary development comes in. Each day the person should review the words and definitions. This is the only way that I know that will help to increase one's vocabulary. As a person, who has a weakness in language because of a learning difference, working on learning a third language, I can personally attest to the fact that only the systematic and regular study of words has enabled me to become bilingual and encouraged me to attempt a third language. Richard Cooper

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Pennsylvania Statewide Staff Development Project

Now that the academic year has come to an end, the activities of the Statewide Staff Development Project turn to completing a final report and planning for the up-coming year. An anecdote from one of the training sessions exemplify the types of comments made by many adult educators and tutors around the state about the alternative instructional techniques presented in the training.

> During an April training session in Western Pennsylvania, Dr. Cooper passed out WordNets to each of the participants and explained how students with weak language skills can use the WordNets to improve their reading, writing and increase their vocabulary. One of the teachers stated that he had been introduced to the WordNets at a previous training in October and tried them with his students. He reported that not only did his students find the WordNets effective, but he also found that his vocabulary increased significantly with the use of WordNets in casual reading. He said, "I was amazed that such a simple, low cost item could be so effective in helping my students improve their language skills and it worked for me because it provided me with a system for vocabulary development."

During this project year the evaluation forms completed by project participants frequently referred to the usefulness of this and many other instructional tools Dr. Cooper distributed and discussed at the training sessions.

New Topics of 1998/99 Four new training topics will be added to the topics available through the statewide staff development project and to Dr. Cooper's training catalog. These training sessions are being developed in response to requests from teachers around the country who have attended Dr. Cooper's training on learning differences.

Teaching GED Math and Science to Adults with Learning Differences This training will focus on the problems which teachers encounter when giving GED instruction in math and science to students who learn differently. There will be ample time allotted for specific questions about learning problems and instructional techniques.

Teaching GED Language and Social Studies to Adults with Learning Differences This training will focus on the problems which teachers encounter when giving instruction in language and social skills to individuals which learning difference who are preparing for the GED. There will be ample time allotted for specific questions about learning problems and instructional techniques.

Helping Parents Understand and Work with Children Who Have Learning Differences This training can be directed either to professionals working with parents or it can be directed to the parents. The training will briefly describe common problems or the "red flags" associated with learning differences, discuss what parents can do to help children improve their basic skills and deal with inappropriate behavior.

Using Mnemonics to Help Students who Learn Differently This training will provide participants with information about how to use mnemonics to assist students with learn material in a variety of subjects, such as math, reading, writing, spelling and subject content areas. Besides learning how to make mnemonics, participants will practice developing mnemonics.

Appendix B

Training Sessions

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G-500 Characteristics of Learning Differences This training session details how individuals with learning differences, problems and disabilities think and learn. The behavioral manifestation of the characteristics of perception, processing and communication problems are outlined and illustrated. Visual, auditory and motor skills problems are described along with problems with reversals, attention, organization and sequencing. This is the most popular of Dr. Cooper's training sessions and provides the basis for adapting instruction to meet individual needs.

G-505 Tic Tac Toe Math The Tic Tac Toe Math system, developed by Dr. Cooper, has proven to be a very effective technique for individuals with learning differences. Many adult students have attributed their success with passing the math section of the GED to Tic Tac Toe Math. This training teaches the system and demonstrates how to teach it to adults and children who have not been able to memorize the times tables.

G-520 If They Think Differently, Shouldn't They Study Differently This training session explores how learning differences impact on study skills. Alternative study skills, those which individuals with various learning problems have found useful, will be demonstrated and discussed. Participants will receive copies of study aids which enable students to become more efficient and effective at studying.

G-530 Helping Students with Test Anxiety Test anxiety is a problem for many students with learning differences. This training session demonstrates a variety of techniques to help students prepare for and take tests. These include learning how to teach students relaxation and study skills and when to implement accommodations. Techniques for analyzing test taking problems will also be demonstrated.

G-540 Assessment of Learning Problems Participants in this session learn about the many methods that are used to assess learning problems. Sample test reports will be shown and the significance of the test scores will be discussed. The presenter will discuss the "red flag" indicators which may cause one to refer individuals for a formal assessment. Particular attention will be paid to the behavioral manifestations of learning problems

enabling educators and parents to identify patterns of thought which make learning different or difficult.

G-545 Cooper Screening of Information Processing (C-SIP) In this training session, Dr. Cooper administers the screening to a student or a volunteer from the audience to demonstrate how the screening can be used as a diagnostic teaching tool. He then goes through each of the sections in the screening, explaining how to administer the screening to various types of students and how to interpret the information obtained from the screening.

G-560 Avoidance Styles and Activities This training explores the reasons why so many individuals with learning differences avoid the very tasks they say they want to do. Participants learn how to identify avoidance behaviors and are provided with suggestions about what they can do to help students break avoidance patterns

CA-510 Teaching Reading, Writing and Math to Adults with Learning Problems This training session provides an overview of alternative techniques for teaching reading, writing and math to individuals with learning problems. Participants learn how to assist students who have problems with language development because of auditory perception and processing problems. The section on math outlines ways to help students improve their computation and problem solving skills.

CA-512 Techniques for Teaching Adults Who Learn Differently This training provides 25 teaching principles which Dr. Cooper has found effective when working with individuals with learning problems. Some examples of these techniques are breaking a task in to smaller tasks, spaced repetition and reducing avoidance patterns.

CA-515 Teaching Adults with Low Level Literacy and Numeracy Skills. This training session is designed for adult educators and literacy tutors who are working with adults who have very low level reading and math ability. The techniques described in this training are similar to those described in other training sessions. The difference is how to adapt them to the low level students. The training will include discussion of setting realistic goals for student progress and helping students set their own realistic goals.

CA-518 Weak Academic Skills Not all students with weak academic skills have learning problems, so many reasons for weak academic skills are detailed and put into perspective in this training. Designed for college faculties, this training provides the participants with concrete suggestions for helping students with weak academic skills improve their skills and increase their chance of completing college.

CA-520 Teaching Reading to Adults with Learning Problems Literacy teachers and tutors report that this training provides them with many practical ideas for teaching individuals with reading problems from the non-reader to the reader with errors.

CA-525 Helping Adults to Improve Reading Comprehension This training describes the reasons why many adults who possess basic literacy skills continue to have difficulty with reading comprehension. Techniques for improving reading comprehension will be explained and demonstrated.

CA-530 Teaching Spelling and Writing to Adults with Learning Problems This training session provides alternative techniques for teaching spelling and writing to individuals with language based learning problems. Participants take part in an exercise which demonstrates the frustration individuals who have learning problems experience when trying to write.

CA-540 Vocabulary Development for Adults with Learning Problems Vocabulary development is critical for academic success. This training presents techniques for vocabulary development to aid oral communication, reading comprehension and critical thinking skills. The presenter explains techniques to assist adults engage in systematic and regular self-study of vocabulary.

CA-550 Teaching Math to Adults with Learning Problems This training session provides information about why individuals with learning differences have difficulty learning math. Alternative techniques for teaching quantitative concepts, arithmetic operations and problem solving skills are explained. A demonstration of Tic Tac Toe Math is included.

CA-555 Multi-level Classroom Techniques This training session uses the techniques taught in the other training sessions and applies them to the multi-level classroom where adults with a wide range of basic skills are grouped together. Participants learn how to plan activities for students who range, in the same classroom, from non-readers to those with post-secondary skills.

CA-560 Helping Adults with Learning Differences to Develop Social and Life Skills The same learning problems that impede the acquisition of basic academic skills often result in difficulties in social interaction, employment and other life skills. This workshop will explore some of these difficulties, especially those which directly impact adult education programs and job readiness skills. Through an explanation of the causes of social and life skill deficiencies, the participants will better understand how to help their students reduce the impact of the social problems and develop strategies for coping with employment and life in general.

CA-570 Counseling Adults with Learning Problems This training session is designed for counselors and others who are interested in issues of self-esteem in individuals with learning differences. The presenter discusses the counseling techniques he has found useful working with adults with varying degrees of learning problems and disabilities. The trainer discusses the critical issue of communicating with individuals who have weak vocabulary, non-sequential thought patterns and unrealistic expectations.

CA-575 Accommodating Adults Who Have Learning Disabilities This training session provides participants with information about when and how to accommodate adults who have documented learning disabilities. The presenter incorporates his experience working with students and the information from the recent research project on accommodating adults in adult education programs.

CA-580 Learning Problems and English as a Second Language This training session for teachers of English as a Second Language explains how learning problems can limit second language acquisition and how to recognize if a student may need to be referred for further testing. Techniques for helping students with minor learning problems to learn English are also discussed.

CA-590 Employment and Learning Problems Since learning problems limit the acquisition of basic academic and social skills, adult educators need to understand how they can address employability skills in their programs. This training provides them with an understanding of the problems which individuals with learning differences encounter in the workplace and provides techniques for helping them cope with the situations.

CA-595 Designing Adult Education Problems to Meet the Needs of Adults with Learning Differences, Problems and Disabilities This presentation will provide adult educators, (administrators and teachers) with ideas and techniques for the establishment and operation of programs which meet the specific needs of individuals who have learning problems of varying degrees. The presentation will include information about recruitment, retention, motivation, evaluation, equipment and curriculum for students who have minimal learning problems and accommodations for those with severe problems.

CA-610 In-Depth Session on Teaching Reading This two day training begins by relating the characteristics of learning problems to difficulties adults have learning to read. Participants learn how various learning problems affect the reading process and the types of reading errors which are associated with the learning problems. Techniques for teaching reading are explained and participants engage in activities using these techniques.

CA-615 In-Depth Session on Teaching Writing This two day training begins by relating the characteristics of learning problems to difficulties adults have with spelling and writing. It goes beyond just learning about alternative techniques. Participants experiment with the alternative techniques. For example they are asked to draw an outline for a writing assignment and learn how to teach this technique to those who might benefit from it.

CA-620 In-Depth Session on Teaching Math This two day training begins by relating the characteristics of learning problems to difficulties adults encounter with math. Participants receive training in alternative instructional techniques, including Tic Tac Toe Math, and have an opportunity to practice using the techniques. Topics include developing quantitative concepts, improving computation skills and increasing problem solving abilities.

Appendix B

CA-630 In-Depth Session on Cooper Screening for Information Processing (C-SIP)
This two day training provides the participants with an opportunity to learn about the Cooper Screening for Information Processing and experiment with it. The screening is first administered to an adult education student or a volunteer from the audience. Participants then practice administrating the screening on each other and learn how to interpret the results.